

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 0050

DEPT PLEASE REPEAT REFS B AND D INFO USUN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, PINR, SHUM, CU, GV

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S STATEMENT IN NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR
ABOUT PRESENCE OF CUBANS IN GUINEA

USUN FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

REF: A) CONAKRY 0047 B) 77 CONAKRY 2417 (NOTAL)

C) 77 CONAKRY 2372 D) 77 CONAKRY 2271 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER BEAVOGUI, CLEARLY ACTING ON
INSTRUCTIONS FROM PRESIDENT SEKOU TOURE, HAS TERMED UNTRUE
AND A VILIFICATION OF GOG A REPORTED STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR
YOUNG THAT CUBANS ARE MILITARYILY SUPPORTING GUINEAN REGIME
WHICH MAINTAINS ITSELF ONLY BY KILLING THE OPPOSITION.
BEAVOGUI'S DEMARCHE REFLECTS EXTREME GUINEAN SENSITIVITY
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TO CRITICAL FOREIGN COMMENT; THIS SENSITIVITY HAS UNDOUBTEDLY
CONTRIBUTED TO CURRENT MORE RESPONSIVE GOG APPROACH TO USG
AND ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, BUT THERE IS A LIMIT BEYOND
WHICH INVIDIOUS COMMENT IS LIKELY TO EVOKE A BACKLASH,
DEFLECTING SEKOU TOURE FROM POLICIES DISTINCTLY MORE
FAVORABLE TO US INTERESTS THAN WAS EARLIER THE CASE.
NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR ARTICLE IS PROBABLY REPRINT OF STATEMENT

DISCUSSED IN REF D; EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE IT ADVISABLE
AVOID CRITICISM OF GOG AT THIS TIME.
END SUMMARY.

2. AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 7 I WAS URGENTLY CALLED TO PRIME
MINISTER BEAVOGUI'S OFFICE TO DISCUSS REPORT APPEARING
IN AFP AFRICAN DAILY NO. 9452 DATED DECEMBER 31, 1977
(FULL TEXT SEPTTEL) QUOTING AMBASSADOR YOUNG AS SAYING IN
AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED BY FRENCH WEEKLY NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR
THAT "ONE MIGHT ALSO ASK WHAT (THE CUBANS).... ARE DOING
IN GUINEA AND UGANDA.... THEY ARE SUPPORTING MILITARILY
REGIMES WHICH MAINTAIN THEMSELVES ONLY BY KILLING THE
OPPOSITION. AND IN THESE COUNTRIES, THE OPPOSITION REPRESENTS
THE MOST DYNAMIC AND MOST INTELLIGENT PART OF THE
POPULATION."

3. IN A CONTROLLED BUT TAUT VOICE, BEAVOGUI EXPRESSED
KEEN HURT AND CONCERN OVER THIS STATEMENT, WHICH HE SAID
WAS COMPLETELY UNTRUE AND A VILIFICATION OF HIS COUNTRY.
HE OBSERVED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD NOT SINGLED OUT
GUINEA IN HIS DECEMBER 15 STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS (WHICH
WE HAD PASSED TO HIM AND OTHER GOG LEADERS) AND HE EXPRESSED
SHOCK THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG SHOULD SPEAK SO DISPARAGINGLY
OF GUINEA NOW. BEAVOGUI SAID THE GOG MADE NO SECRET OF
THE FACT THAT THERE ARE CUBANS IN GUINEA, BUT HE
STOUTLY DENIED THE ALLEGATION THAT THEY ARE SUPPORTING
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THE GOG MILITARILY; THERE IS INDEED A BATTALION OF CUBAN
ENGINEERS ENGAGED IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION UPCOUNTRY, BETWEEN
KISSIDOUYOU AND KANKAN, BUT THIS COULD SCARCELY
BE CALLED "MILITARY SUPPORT" IN THE SENSE AMBASSADOR
YOUNG APPARENTLY HAD IN MIND. THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED
THAT THE CUBANS ARE ALSO CARRYING OUT ONE OR TWO AGRICULTURAL
PROJECTS AND DOING SOME TEACHING, BUT THIS CANNOT
BE CALLED MILITARY SUPPORT EITHER. WITH CONSIDERABLE
URGENCY IN HIS VOICE, HE ASKED ME TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER
AND SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

4. I SAID I WOULD PURSUE THE SUBJECT AT ONCE AND SPECULATED
THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG MIGHT HAVE HAD IN MIND THE
REPORT THAT THERE IS A CONTINGENT OF CUBAN SOLDIERS IN A
GOG SECURITY FORCE. BEAVOGUI SCOFFED AT THIS, SAID THE
GOG HAD HEARD THE STORY ABOUT A CUBAN "PRAETORIAN
GUARD" AND LAUGHED ABOUT IT; THERE IS NO SUCH THING. I
SAID I WAS GLAD TO HEAR IT AND EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF
CLEARING UP ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS OR INACCURACIES OF VIEW
THAT MIGHT EXIST BETWEEN US. BEAVOGUI SAID AMBASSADOR
YOUNG OUGHT TO COME TO SEE FOR HIMSELF; THE GOG HAS
INVITED HIM SEVERAL TIMES AND HOPES HE WILL COME.

5. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE
USG ATTACHES TO CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA, MENTIONING
UNKEPT CUBAN PROMISES OF PERSONNEL REDUCTIONS IN ANGOLA
AND CUBAN BUILDUP IN ETHIOPIA, TOGETHER WITH THE SOVIETS
WHOSE WEAPONS WERE BEING USED BY BOTH SIDES. I CITED
US POSITION THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES AND OAU SHOULD BE
LEFT TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM WITHOUT OUTSIDE
INTERFERENCE.

6. WE PARTED AMICABLY, ALTHOUGH BEAVOGUI WAS STILL
CLEARLY STRONGLY EXERCISED OVER THE MATTER. I SAID I WAS
VERY GLAD HE HAD CALLED ME AND ENCOURAGED HIM TO DO SO
AT ANY TIME IF ANYTHING ELSE AROSE THAT MIGHT CREATE
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MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. HE SAID
HE WOULD.

7. COMMENT: A. NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR REPORT MAY WELL BE REPRINT OF
STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REF D. WOULD APPRECIATE
INDICATION FROM DEPT, PARIS OR USUN AS TO WHETHER THIS IS THE CASE.

B. BEAVOGUI'S DEMARCHE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY MADE ON
INSTRUCTIONS FROM PRESIDENT
EKOU TOURE. IT REFLECTS THE
ALERTNESS WITH WHICH TOURE AND HIS GOVERNMENT FOLLOW THE
WORLD PRESS AND SEEK OUT STATEMENTS ABOUT GUINEA, AND IT
TESTIFIES TO THEIR SENSITIVITY TO INVIDIOUS COMMENT FROM
ABROAD. IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, IT PROBABLY CUT MORE
SHARPLY COMING FROM AMBASSADOR YOUNG, WHOM GOG LEADERS
ADMIRE AND WOULD GREATLY LIKE TO HAVE VISIT HERE.

C. CHASTENING AND INHIBITING INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN
ATTITUDES TOWARD SEKOU TOURE'S GOVERNMENT HAS BECOME
INCREASINGLY CLEAR AND WE BELIEVE HAS CONTRIBUTED
SIGNIFICANTLY TO CURRENT POSITIVE MOVES IN HUMAN RIGHTS
FIELD. AS WE HAVE REPORTED IN RECENT MESSAGES (REFS
A, B, C AND D), MOOD AND ATMOSPHERE ARE OF CRUCIAL IMPOR-
TANCE IN DEALING WITH SEKOU TOURE. AT PRESENT TIME,
WHEN HE IS TAKING COOPERATIVE APPROACH TO BOTH RELATIONS
WITH US AND HUMAN RIGHTS, WE BELIEVE IT VITAL THAT, TO
MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE, USG AVOID CRITICAL COMMENT THAT
MIGHT SHAKE TOURE FROM THIS POSITIVE COURSE.

8. FACTS RE CUBAN PRESENCE IN GUINEA ARE GENERALLY AS
PRESENTED REF D, BUT WE HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE THAT
CHALLENGES BEAVOGUI'S FLAT DENIAL OF CURRENT EXISTENCE OF
A CUBAN "PRAETORIAN GUARD". THE REPORT OF ONE
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OR TWO DOZEN CUBANS ATTACHED TO SEKOU TOURE'S BODYGUARD HAS NOT BEEN RECENTLY CORROBORATED; IT IS EASILY POSSIBLE THAT THERE WAS SUCH A PRESENCE EARLIER BUT THAT CUBANS HAVE NOW BEEN REPLACED BY GUINEANS, POSSIBLY TRAINED IN CUBA FOR BODYGUARD SERVICE. IN EITHER CASE, AS INDICATED REF D, BODYGUARD ROLE IS A PASSIVE ONE OF INTERNAL DEFENSE AND IS NOT IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF REPRESSIVE MEASURES. CROSBY UNQTE VANCE

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